

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 and 22-57 were originally pending in the application. Claims 1, 28-34, and 57 are rejected. Claims 1, 3, and 20 have been amended. Claims 2 and 57 have been cancelled. Claims 1, 3-20 and 22-56 are now pending in the application. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application is respectfully requested in light of the following remarks.

I. Claim Rejections 35 USC 102

Claim 57 is rejected under 35 USC 102 as being anticipated by Itoigawa. Claim 57 has been cancelled, thereby obviating the present rejection.

Applicant reserves the right to pursue claim 57 in a continuation application.

II. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1 and 28-34 are rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over Christenson. Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of dependent claim 2 (now cancelled). Claim 2 was identified in the Office Action as being allowable over the prior art. Accordingly, claim 1 is now allowable over the prior art. Furthermore, corresponding dependent claims 28-34 are now allowable for at least the reason of depending from allowable claim 1.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and 28-34 is respectfully requested.

III. Amendments to Claims 3 and 20

Claims 3 and 20, which depended from now-cancelled claim 2, have been amended to depend from claim 1. These amendments have been made for the purposes of proper dependency, and not for reasons related to patentability of the claimed subject matter.

IV. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant notes with appreciation that claims 2-27 and 35-56 are allowed. However, claim 21 had been cancelled in the Amendment dated September 11, 2003. Accordingly, Applicant understands that claims 2-20, 22-27, and 35-56 are allowed. As discussed above, the limitations of claim 2 have been incorporated into claim 1, and claim 2 has been cancelled. Formal allowance of claims 3-20, 22-27, and 35-56 is respectfully requested.

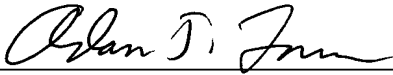
V. Conclusion

Applicant respectfully asserts that all rejections and objections cited by the Examiner have been overcome. Furthermore, this Amendment does not present any additional issues with respect to the pending claims. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that this Amendment be entered into the record of the application. Further, Applicant submits that the application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Applicant hereby authorizes the Commissioner to charge the \$110 fee for a one-month extension of time, along with any other fees arising from this or any other communication, to deposit account No. 17-0055. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number appearing below if such would advance the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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